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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the status of dual credit enrollment programs in Illinois, using two recent studies on the distribution and utilization of dual credit/enrollment in the state as information sources. The Illinois Community College Presidents' Council surveyed all 48 Illinois community colleges regarding dual enrollment for the academic years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001; and the Research Division of the Illinois State Board of Education published a report on 2000-2001 high school students enrolled in community college courses. This paper reports that there was a 73% increase in secondary schools participating in dual credit programs in 2000-2001, with 503 secondary schools involved. A total of 733 courses were offered statewide for dual credit during the 2000-2001 school year, and students enrolled in 29 subject areas. The most popular subjects were computer and information sciences (23% of total enrollments), English (14%), and business (12%). In 1990-1991, 2,220 students enrolled in dual credit courses, while in 2000-2001, 11,809 students enrolled, for an increase of 432%. In 2000-2001, 77% of participating students were white, 11% black, 8% Hispanic, and 2% Asian; 52% were female and 48% male. The paper also gives a brief overview of quality assurance issues and the main strengths and problems of the program. (NB)

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Dual Credit/Enrollment in Illinois: A Status Report In Brief

Hans Andrews and Elisabeth Barnett

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OCCRL In Brief
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DUAL CREDIT/ENROLLMENT IN ILLINOIS
A STATUS REPORT

By Hans Andrews and Elisabeth Barnett

Background

Illinois has been offering dual credit/enrollment programs in some form since 1984 when the first such program began in Ottawa, at around the same time as the earliest programs were appearing on the national scene. It grew slowly for a number of years, experiencing some forward movement when school/college partnerships led to new initiatives, or in response to Tech Prep program development.

However, two changes spurred much faster growth. In 1996, the Illinois Community College Board changed its rules to permit both school districts and colleges to claim dually enrolled students for funding based on average daily attendance (schools) or credit hours (colleges). Further growth came in response to the availability of Accelerated College Enrollment (ACE) grants, initiated in 2001 to cover part or all of participating students' tuition and fees (Kerr, 2001).

The appeal of dual credit/enrollment is very widespread both in Illinois and around the country, because of its potential to address a number of critical and emerging issues:

- Reducing college costs for families and the state.
- Accelerating student progress toward degree completion.
- Providing greater challenges to advanced students.
- Increasing access to a wider array of course options, college instructors, and facilities, especially important to small, rural schools.
- Increasing students' ability to visualize themselves as "college material."
- Improving pathways for a "seamless" transition to college (Boswell, 2001).

Unlike many other states, Illinois does not have many state policies to guide the development of dual credit/enrollment programs. According to a study conducted by Calvin M. Frazier, 23 states have established these programs through legislation, 12 states have state rules or guidelines, and 15 states, including Illinois, have locally developed agreements (2000). According to both Frazier and Boswell (2001), states without state-level policies are less likely to have well-developed initiatives, and more likely to show uneven implementation and limited student access.

Dual Credit/Enrollment in Illinois Information Sources

We are fortunate in Illinois to have two excellent sources of information on the distribution and utilization of dual credit/enrollment in the state. The Illinois Community College Presidents' Council, under the leadership of Dr. Hans Andrews and Dr. Robert Mees, has surveyed all 48 community colleges in the state on this topic for the academic years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. In addition, the Research Division of the Illinois State Board of Education has published a report entitled *2000-2001 Census of High School Students Enrolled in Community College Courses for High School Credit*, under the direction of Diane Baker. The findings of these two studies offer very helpful insights into the development of this program in Illinois.

Definitions

Dual enrollment: Students are concurrently enrolled and taking classes in high school and college.

Dual credit: Students receive both high school and college credit for a college-level class successfully completed.

Colleges and Programs of Study

- All 48 community colleges in the state offer some form of dual credit/enrollment (Andrews 2001).
- The colleges with the greatest number of participating students in 2000-2001 were: Lewis and Clark (21% of the state total), Lake Land (5%) and Triton (5%) (ISBE 2000).
- In 2000-2001, community colleges reported that 503 secondary schools were involved in the program, an increase of 73% over the previous year and 406% since the ICCB funding change in 1996-97 (Andrews).
- A total of 733 courses were offered statewide for dual credit during the 2000-2001 year (Andrews).
- Students were enrolled in 29 subject areas, the most popular being computer and information sciences (23% of total enrollments), English (14%), and business (12%) (ISBE).
- Most students took courses offered in the high school (85%), while others attended courses on college campuses (15%) (ISBE).
- In 2000-2001, 36% of students were not charged tuition, 25% had their tuition paid by school district, and 22% paid tuition themselves (ISBE).

Student Participation

- As noted above, there has been enormous growth in student numbers and credits awarded in the past decade (ISBE):

	Number of Students	Number of Credits Earned	Mean Credits per Student
1990-1991	2220	2075	.93
2000-2001	11809	13675	1.16
% increase	432%	559%	25%

- In 2000-2001, a total of 10,077 students attended college classes offered at their high schools, while 1788 were enrolled in classes at a nearby college (56 did both) (ISBE).
- Of all participating students that year, 77% were white, 11% black, 8% Hispanic, and 2% of Asian origin (ISBE).
- 52% were female and 48% male (ISBE).
- Students earning dual credit resided in 94 of Illinois' 102 counties. Cook County was home to 3146 or 27% of the total (ISBE).
- There were important differences in participation by school, even in regions with significant involvement. For example, in the region corresponding to Champaign and Ford Counties, high schools had a range of 1 to 115 students participating, with a total of 225 enrolled district-wide (ISBE).

Quality Assurance

The colleges surveyed by Andrews and Mees in 2000-2001 were asked about the quality safeguards used in their programs. They emphasized the importance of employing qualified faculty who use college-level curriculum and materials. In addition, colleges took precautions to make sure that students were ready to handle college coursework

- 34 mentioned the need to have qualified faculty. Of these, 11 require their faculty to have masters degrees; 9 stated that faculty teaching in the high schools must have the same qualifications as college faculty; 5 emphasized the use of full time instructors.
- 14 colleges emphasized efforts to insure that course content is of a high level. Of these, 7 mentioned the use of college level curriculum; 4 cited direct supervision over course content.
- 19 colleges stated that they screen students for their readiness for college courses. Of these, 12 colleges mentioned the use of placement tests to determine student readiness; 6 colleges referred to other prerequisites for admission.
- 16 colleges discussed other ways to maintain quality. Of these, 4 emphasized student services; 2 highlighted coordination between high school and college faculty.

Main Strengths of Programs

In the same survey, colleges mentioned the following as their programs' main areas of strength:

- Good relationships between high schools and colleges (17 mentions).
- Expanded opportunities for students, including more course offerings, greater intellectual challenges, access to college credit, etc. (15).
- The program's ability to save students time and money (7).
- The quality of instructors and courses (6).
- Support of student recruitment (3).
- Community service aspects (2).

Main Concerns Related to the Programs

Colleges also expressed concern about the following program aspects, locally or statewide:

- The need to insure course and instructor quality (6 mentions).
- Student readiness issues (4).
- University reluctance to accept credits (4).
- The sufficiency of funding (4).
- Aspects of ACE grant funding (3).
- Issues related to faculty support of the program (3).
- The blurring of lines between high school and college work (2).

The Future of Dual Credit/Enrollment in Illinois

Participation: All indicators point to continued growth in these programs because they are meeting the needs of students, parents, school districts, and colleges. However, uneven implementation and lack of state-level guidance raises questions about student access and the adequacy of quality controls.

ACE grants: In the Andrews and Mees study, almost every college described these grants as having a significant effect on program growth. Their continued availability will be likely to strengthen the program over time.

Articulation Project: In order to improve articulation between the secondary and postsecondary educational systems, a project was developed in the fall of 2001 as a coordinated effort among the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at UIUC, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Illinois Community College Board. A Project Team was organized to look at this issue, and decided to focus primarily on dual credit and enrollment programs as having great promise to improve the educational experience of Illinois students in their transition between high school and college. Initial activities have included: gathering data on the status of dual credit/enrollment in Illinois, searching out resources on this topic from around the country, researching and visiting exemplary projects, and beginning to disseminate information via conference presentations, publications, and posting of key resources on the web.

Policy issues: There are a number of policy issues that must be considered in order to optimize dual credit and enrollment programs in Illinois, and insure broad access. Further examination of approaches and best practices in Illinois and elsewhere may lead to new policy initiatives.

Resources

For more information on this topic, see the following websites:

Office of Community College Research and Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Update Newsletter, 13, 4-6.
http://occrl.ed.uiuc.edu/Update/fall01.asp

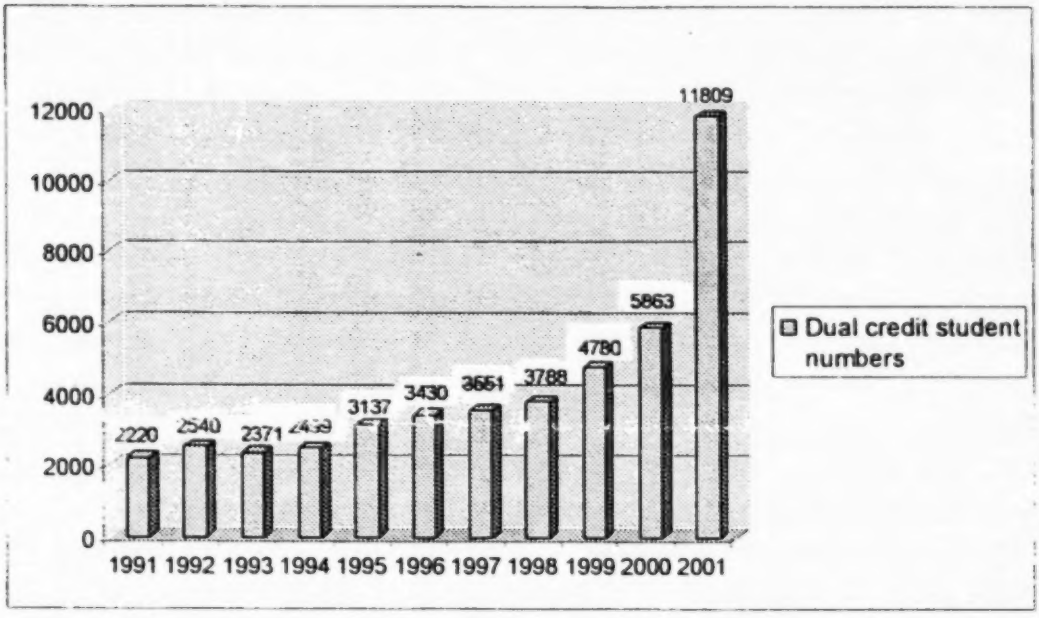
Articulation/dual credit information:
http://occrl.ed.uiuc.edu/Articulation

Education Commission for the States

Postsecondary options: Dual/concurrent enrollment
http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/issues.asp

Student pathways through high school to college, by David R. Pierce
http://www.ecs.org/html/IssueSection.asp?issueid=76&s=Other

Student Participation in Illinois Dual Enrollment Programs
1991-2001
From ISBE data, October 2000



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The Authors

Hans A. Andrews is President of Olney Central College in Illinois and has worked with dual-credit programming for 16 years. He can be contacted at andrewsh@iece.ec.il.us. **Elisabeth Barnett** is an Information Specialist at the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and may be reached at ebarnett@uiuc.edu.

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51 Gerty Drive, CRC Room 129 · Champaign, IL 61820
217-244-9390 · Fax: 217-244-0851
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